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Research Article

Delving into the Spoken English of T'boli ESL Learners: A Descriptive Study

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ABSTRACT

A culturally pluralistic country, the Philippines has more than a hundred spoken languages used on national, regional, and local scales. With this abundant number, studies on English as a second language acquisition by many indigenous people have remained scarce over the years. To attempt to address the lacuna, this qualitative study aimed to describe the spoken English of the T'bolis at the word and sentential levels. The participants of the study were 20 senior high school T'boli students at one private school in the Municipality of T'boli, South Cotabato. They were asked to read an English newspaper article, and recordings of the utterances were transcribed and analyzed through structured guides. Based on the findings, the participants exhibited dominant features in their spoken English, like replacing vowels and consonant sounds; substituting and omitting sounds when articulating words; shifting the stress of a syllable of a word; not pausing before and after a parenthetical expression and after a thought group; using falling intonation in unfinished statements; and using rising tone in the second syllable of words that are not considered important in a statement. While the findings of this study served as bases for understanding the dominant features of the T'boli spoken English, they do not necessarily reflect the distinction of their spoken English among other non-native English speakers. The study then implies that there is a need to understand the English communication skills of T'bolis, the idiosyncrasies of their native language, and other factors that affect how they learn English.

Keywords*: ESL learners, Spoken English, T'boli,*

Introduction

Everyone, regardless of ethnicity, religious affiliation, or geographic location, uses language in their daily life. It is a medium via which individuals can communicate their thoughts, needs, and questions to the world, with a wide range of feelings through words, body language, and tone (Falkum, 2019; Tillayeva,

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2020). This sets humans apart from the rest of the animal kingdom – the capacity to leverage their intrinsic ability to build lasting ties with one another, and the unique and different ways in which they may do this through written and spoken language (De Valoes, 2014).

As a language, English is spoken by more than 350 million people in the world as their first language. On the other hand, almost half a billion people are using English as their second language (Ilyosovna, 2020; Mazlum, 2022). With a large number of people using it as a native or second/foreign language, it is considered to be the world's lingua franca. With English as a lingua franca, there have been studies (see Boonkit, 2010; Clahsen & Felser, 2006; Gass & Varonis, 1985; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010) showing that the way non-native English speakers speak this language is slightly and may even be highly different from that of native speakers. According to Language Magazine (2017), since the cues that signify the beginning and end of words can vary from language to language, a person's native language can alter the way the brain perceives auditory words in a second language. While learning how to break down a foreign language into words, a person's first language may convey false information. Moreover, vocabulary, grammar, L1 interference, confidence, and drive are a few more considerations (Adwani & Shrivastava, 2017).

A culturally pluralistic country, the Philippines has more than 180 spoken languages used on national, regional, and local scales (Wa-Mbaleka, 2014; Young & Igcalinos, 2019). With this abundant number, studies on English as a second language acquisition by many indigenous people have remained scarce over the years. Research also proves that the study of the patterns and functions of sounds, which is known as phonology, presents a significant obstacle for indigenous students studying English in mainstream schools in the Philippines. During instruction, many of them have trouble gaining fundamental abilities in language literacy domains such as knowledge of the alphabet, phonics and word recognition, and phonological awareness. Other domains of difficulty include phonological awareness (Leaño et al., 2019).

One indigenous tribe in the Philippines, the T'bolis have to learn English to cope with the needs and demands of the modern and highly competitive world. The T'bolis, also known as the Tiboli or Tagabili, mainly settle in the southern part of Mindanao, including the province of South Cotabato (Talavera, 2013). Their language called T'boli is a Western Polynesian language of the southern Philippines and is spoken by approximately 100, 000 people (Awed et al., 2004), and has been relatively left unexplored when it comes to its effect on English language acquisition and production. For instance, in pronunciation, there has been no study on how T'bolis produce the vowels and consonants in English and whether the sound production has something to do with T'boli language's seven vowel sounds and 16 consonant sounds. This area could show one of the many possible factors that could affect the production of T'boli spoken English. Moreover, studies on the relationship between L1 and L2 speaking skills have been inconclusive (Kaushanskaya et al., 2012). Thus, describing first spoken English, especially in terms of pronunciation, articulation, stress, juncture, and intonation of a certain group of indigenous people who are non-native speakers can be viewed as a novel knowledge contribution to the field of language acquisition. Bygate (2009) stated that the study of speaking in its own right has been a relatively recent addition to the range of linguistics and applied linguistics specialisms. This is in spite of the popular assumption that knowing or learning a language centrally involves being able to 'speak' it or the common claims that language pedagogy and linguistics prioritize the study and teaching of the vernacular. To address the research lacuna, this study delved into T'boli spoken English by describing it in terms of pronunciation, articulation, stress, juncture, and intonation.

Describing the T'boli spoken English could provide suggestions to all persons interested and committed to improving the spoken English language of non-native speakers and/or indigenous tribes. Furthermore, this will also supplement some ways to motivate and encourage them to improve their spoken English. For learners, the findings of this study could give them a chance to identify their spoken

English language and the opportunity to improve their spoken language at both word and sentential levels. In the same way, this study could provide teachers with important information in understanding the T'boli spoken English which is deemed necessary in making teaching adjustments.

Methods

Design

Since this study is limited to one small size group with similar characteristics, the researcher used a descriptive-qualitative research design to describe in-depth the T'boli spoken English of the participants of the study. Accad and Accad (2016) stated that qualitative research seeks to reveal information related to or based on the non-numerical value or characteristics of things, events, people, society, and the reasons for everything. This is the preferred method in this study for it provided a rich description of the T'boli spoken English and at the same time it provided a comprehensive summarization of the distinct features of the spoken English of T'bolis.

Locale and Participants

The study was conducted in one of the barangays in the Municipality of T'boli, South Cotabato, Phillippines, where the main author teaches as an English teacher. It was then chosen as the study's locale for its accessibility and for its aptness with the objectives of the study. Through homogeneous purposive sampling, 20 participants who were senior high school students were chosen. Since the researcher intended to build similar segments within the population, the sample size of 20 participants was enough to reach data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). In choosing them, a set of inclusion criteria was considered: one must be currently enrolled and learning English as a second language, have attended schools within the barangay since elementary till present, be a native T'boli, was born and raised in T'boli, South Cotabato, and be willing to participate without financial compensations. The participants were selected by checking school records, particularly the Learner Information System (LIS). The LIS shows the date of birth of the students, their mother tongue, ethnicity, parents' names, last school attended, and address. Moreover, it was made clear to the participants that their (non) participation in this study had nothing to do with their academic progress and that the data gathered would be solely used for research.

Instrumentation

Guides were used to analyze the transcribed utterances in terms of pronunciation, articulation, stress, juncture, and intonation. The pronunciation guide was developed using the mobile application English Phonetics. The transcription in this application is based on the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) that automatically provides the English phonetics for words and sentences. Stress markers are also included in its transcriptions, so the same application was used in identifying the syllable of the words that should be stressed. For the articulation, Dictionary.com, a digital dictionary that provides the phonetic spelling of English words, was used. Dictionary.com was first launched in 1995. It provides millions of English definitions, spellings, audio pronunciations, example sentences, and word origins; and it has 70 million monthly users. Dictionary.com's main proprietary source is the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, which is continually updated by a team of experienced lexicographers and supplemented with trusted, established sources including American Heritage and Harper Collins to support a range of language needs. Meanwhile, the guide for juncture and intonation was developed by the researchers based on the rules of juncture and intonation. For juncture, there are three symbols: single bar juncture (/), double bar juncture (//), and double cross juncture (#). Single bar juncture is used between two thought groups in a sentence and it indicates the need for a slight pause. Meanwhile, double bar juncture is used with an appositive, before and after a nonrestrictive clause, before and after a parenthetical expression, and after a verbal phrase; and it indicates the need for a longer pause between two thought groups in a sentence. Lastly, the double cross juncture characterizes a drop in pitch. For intonation, a falling intonation should be used with statements and commands, and with wh- questions. A downward arrow indicates falling intonation; an

upward arrow indicates rising intonation. Rising intonation should be used with Yes/ No questions. When naming items on a list or when offering choices, except for the last item or choice, a rising intonation is used. For the last item or choice, falling intonation should be used. These guides were checked and validated by three language experts. They also underwent a series of pilot tests so the researchers could refine it even better.

Data Gathering Procedures

The researchers sought permission from the Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative (IPMR) of Laconon, T'boli, South Cotabato, and from the research committee of the Notre Dame of Marbel University in order to commence the procedures. Upon approval, the participants of the study were selected. Upon completely filling out the consent forms, each identified participant was briefed about the background and purpose of the study. Then, each of them was given a news article to read and was made aware that a recorder was in place to document the entire process.

Data Analysis

The data collected in this study were made concrete through transcripts. The audio recordings along with their corresponding transcriptions were to experts who then verified the accuracy of the transcripts. They listened to the audio recordings, checked whether they matched the transcriptions, and made corrections. To analyze the transcripts, the researcher organized the participants' utterances in a table and identified the dominant features of the spoken English of the T'boli senior high school students. The transcripts were then compared with the structured standard guides.

Ethical Standards

With the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic, the researchers followed safety protocols during the conduct of the study. These safety measures include wearing a mask and face shield, observance of social distancing, and hand sanitizing. The mechanical devices used in recording the data were also sanitized before and after each recording. Meanwhile, the consent form that the participants signed indicated complete details about the nature of the study, the benefits to expect, and the extent of their involvement. Furthermore, they were informed that their utterance would not be regarded as erroneous but instead be used to describe their spoken English. It was also made clear to them that their participation was highly voluntary and that they could withdraw anytime. Lastly, throughout the study, their names and personal details were kept completely anonymous.

Results and Discussion

Spoken English of the Participants at the Word Level

There are three aspects included at the word level: pronunciation, articulation, and stress. Extracts from the participants' transcripts which considered dominant features of the T'boli spoken English are presented in detail below.

Pronunciation

The replacement of the vowel and consonant sounds dominated in the transcription of the readings.

Extract 1
də dæmeds kɔːs baɪ riːseɪd teɪpuːn maɪ resʊrt tə ə dekrɪs
ɪn də kaʊntri self seɪfʃɪnsi fər raɪs baɪ ə faɪv
pərsent frəm də kɜːrek tɑːrget əb də depɑːrtment
əb ægrɪkʊltʃʊr sekerktəre wɪləm der /saɪd/ θɜːrsdeɪ

Extract 1 shows that the medial vowel [ə] is replaced with [ʊ] in /ægrɪkʌltʃər/, the final vowel [ʌ] is replaced with [ʊ], and the medial consonant [l] with [r] in /rɪzʌlt/. The medial vowel [ʌ] is replaced with a diphthong [aʊ] in this pronunciation of /kʌntrɪ/. The medial vowel [ɪ] is replaced with [e] in /tɑːrgɪt/. The medial consonant [z] is replaced with [s] in /θɜːrzdeɪ/ and /rɪzʌlt/ and the initial consonant [ð] was replaced with [d] in [ðə].

Extract 2
taɪpuːn kwɪnta rʊlɪ ən həb kɔːs twelb pɔɪnts trɪ bɪljʊn

peisʊs ɪn dæmeds tə də ægrɪkʊrtʃʊr
sektʊr beɪs ɑːn diːeɪs
deɪtə əs əv θɜːrsdeɪ mɔːrnɪŋ

Extract 2 depicts that the medial [ə] sound is substituted with [ʊ] in /bɪljən/, the final consonant [v] is substituted with [b] in /twelv/, and the medial vowel [ə] is replaced with [ʊ] in /sektər/. The medial [l] sound is replaced with [r] in /ægrɪkʌltʃər/.

Extract 3
æks ɪf dɪs miːns dɪn dət der wɪl bi
mɔːr raɪs ɪmpɔːtən
fər tuː θaʊsn twentɪ wʌn dɑːr /sɪd/
jes dət ɪs ə gɪvn
bɪkɔːs wi ɑːr nɑːt eɪbl tə prʊdʊs
jet wʌn hʌndred
pərsent əv aʊər /rɪkwaɪrmənt/

It is manifested in Extract 3 that the initial consonant [ð] is replaced with [d] in /ðɪs/, /ðɪn/, /ðət/ and /ðer/. The final and medial consonant [z] in /ɪz/, /miːnz/, /bɪkɔːz/, and /θaʊznd/ is replaced with [s]. There is also a replacement of the medial vowel [ə] with [e] in /hʌndrəd/.

Extract 4
ɪn ə ɪntərbjuː wɪd eɪ bi es siː biː en nuːs
tʃænel dɑːr /sɪd/ də
də wɒn tə elɪvɪt də kʌntrɪ raɪs selb
sərfɪsjensi lever raɪs
tə naɪntɪ trɪ pərsɪnt

Extract 4 shows that the final [i] sound is replaced with [ɪ] in /naɪnti/, the final consonant [z] is replaced with [s] in /nuːz/, the medial consonant [v] is substituted with [b] in /ɪntərvjuː/, the final [ð] sound is replaced with [d] in /wɪð/, and the final [l] sound in /levl/ is replaced with [r].

Extract 5
wɪdɪn ðə jers əs aɪ həb /saɪd/ baɪ
də end əb ðə
jer wi stɪl həb eɪtɪ tuː deɪs tə læst
miːnɪŋ dət wɪl breəjt
əs ənʌðər eɪtɪ tuː deɪs frəm dʒænwərɪ
tuː θaʊsnd
twentɪ wʌn ðen wi wɪl həb frədʌkʃn
baɪ leɪt mɑrtʃ ənd
eɪprɪl hi ʊlsʊ /saɪd/

The replacement of the medial consonant [ð] with [d] in /wɪðɪn/ is evident in Extract 5. There is a replacement of the final consonant [z] with [s] in /əz/ and /deɪz/, the medial consonant [v] with [b] in /həv/, the medial phoneme [jue] with [wə] in /dʒænjueri/, the medial vowel [i] with [ɪ] in twentɪ, the final consonant [tʃ] with [ts] in /mɑrtʃ/, and the medial vowel [ə] with [ɪ] in /eɪprəl/.

Extract 6
nevərles hi əʃʊr dət də kaʊntrɪ stɪl
/həs/ ɪnʊ səplaɪ
əv raɪs dɪspaɪt də devəsteɪʃʊn kɔːsd
baɪ ðə riːsent taɪfuːnz
ðə leɪtɪs əv wɪts /wəs/ taɪfuːn juːljiːs
dət /brʊwts/ sevɪr
fluːdɪŋ ɪn paːts əv ləzuːn

Extract 6 shows that there was a replacement of [s] for the final and medial consonant [z] in /həz/, /wəz/ and /kɔːzd/. The word "flooding" is pronounced /fluːdɪŋ/ instead of /flʌdɪŋ/, replacing the medial vowel [ʌ] with [uː]. However, most of the participants do not replace the [f] sound with [p], as evident in their pronunciation of /taɪfuːn/.

Extract 7
naʊ ɪf wi ɑːr eɪbʊl tə mɪt dət tɑːrget
dɪn wi wɪl həv tə
ɪmpʊt even persɪnt əb awɪr toʊtr
raɪs kənʃʊmpʃʊn hi /saɪd/

The substitution of the final [l] sound with [r] in /toʊtl/ is evident in Extract 7.

The participants tend to substitute vowel and consonant sounds as evident in these extracts. They replaced the vowel [ə] with [ʊ], [ɪ], [e]. For example, the [ə] in [ægrɪkʌltʃər] is replaced with [ʊ]. This means that the participants of the study lifted their tongues high in the mouth and shifted toward the back which caused them to produce [ʊ] instead of [ə]. The spelling of the word made the participants replace the medial vowel [ə] with [ɪ] in [eɪprəl] and [ə] with [e] in [hʌndrəd]. The same case influenced them to substitute the medial vowel

[ə] in [bɪljən] and [sector] with [ʊ]. The data also show that **the participants are predisposed to shifting this vowel with [**aʊ], [uː], and [ʊ]. This replacement occurred in the medial position and it occurred in /flʌdɪŋ/ and /rɪzʌlt/ which they pronounced as /fluːdɪŋ/ and /rɪzʊlt/. Diphthongization is also evident in their pronunciation of the word /kʌntrɪ/ wherein they replaced the medial [ʌ] sound with a diphthong [aʊ].

When dealing with the final vowel [i], the participants of the study tend to substitute it with the vowel [ɪ]. Thus, instead of producing a long vowel sound, they produced a short vowel sound instead. This is apparent in their pronunciation of /naɪnti/, /twenti/, and /eɪti/ which they pronounced as /naɪntɪ/, /twentɪ/, and /eɪtɪ/. The participants also replaced the consonant [z] with [s]. The [z] and [s] sounds are both alveolar. The [z] and [s] sounds are often studied as a pair because they sound very similar, and both sounds are made in the same part of the mouth. However, [z] is a voiced consonant, and [s] is voiceless. When the vocal cords are stretched tight so that they vibrate during the pronunciation of a sound, the sound is voiced. The participants could cope with the manner and the place of articulation of the [z] sound, but they devoiced it which resulted in the production of the voiceless [s] sound. This substitution happened in the medial [z] in /rɪzʌlt/, /θɜːrzdeɪ/, /θaʊznd/, and /kɔːzd/; and in the final [z] in /nuːz/, /miːnz/, /ɪz/, /bɪkɔːz/, /kɔːzd/, /deɪz/, /wəz/, /həz/, and /əz/. Further, the rules in the sounds of [s] and [z] state that if the word ends in a voiceless sound such as /p/, /k/, /t/, /f/, and /th/, the -s ending is pronounced [s]; and if the word ends in voiced sounds such as /d/, /th- ð/, /v/, /r/, /b/, /n/, /m/, /l/, /g/, /ŋ/ and vowels, the -s ending is pronounced [z]. The T'boli alphabet does not have a voiced consonant [z] but it has its corresponding voiceless consonant [s]. So, the T'bolis are not accustomed to the standard usage of the [z] and [s] sounds in words. They tend to pronounce "s" in any English words as the consonant [s] sound.

The English consonant [ð] is described as a voiced dental fricative sound which means its production should fulfill the three main features of [ð] sound (Habibi, 2016). The participants of the study tend to not touch their tongue to the dental area but to the nearest place of articulation which was the alveolar ridge and changed their manner of articulation to a stop or plosive which resulted in the production of the sound [d] which substituted the [ð] sound. This kind of substitution happened in the initial [ð] in [ðer], [ðen], [ðət] and [ðə], medial [ð] in wɪðɪn, and final [ð] in wɪð. In the same way, the participants of the study have a propensity of substituting the [v] sound with [b] sound. That is, instead of squeezing the air between their top teeth and lower lip, they block the air fully with both their lips and then release it causing the replacement of a fricative [v] sound with a plosive [b] sound. This was evident in their pronunciation of the final [v] in /həv/ and /twelv/, and medial [v] in /ɪntərvju/. This replacement could be due to the lack of the letter "v" in their native language.

The **[**tʃ] sound, a **voiceless, alveo-palatal, affricate consonant, is produced by** placing the tip of the tongue just behind the hard ridge at the front of the top of the mouth, pushing air forward out of the mouth, stopping the air completely at first, and then releasing it. After release, the air should create friction between the tip of the tongue and the roof of the mouth (The Tools for Clear Speech, 2021). The final consonant **[**tʃ] in mɑrtʃ tends to be replaced by the participants of the study with the [ts] sound.

Further, the participants of the study pronounced /dʒænjueri/ as /dʒænwəri/ which means they replaced the phoneme [jue] with [wə]. The way the word "January" is spelled may have affected the substitution of this sound specifically in the letters "u" and "a". The participants in this case, produced the [w] sound for the letter "u" and the vowel [ə] for the letter "a". These two letters in the word "January" in Standard English correspond to the three IPA symbols [j], [u] and [e]. According to Umera-Okeke (2008), the same letter does not always represent the same sound and is one of the areas of sound and spelling inconsistencies in the English language.

According to Shariatmadari (2014), a dark "l", in linguistic jargon, is one pronounced with the back of the tongue raised. In English, it is

found after vowels, as in the words full or pole. This tongue raising can go so far that the "l" ends up sounding like a "w". People frown on this in non-standard dialects such as cockney ("the ol' bill"). But the "l" in folk, talk, and walk used to be pronounced. Now almost everyone uses a "w" instead. People effectively say fowk, tawk, and wawk. In contrast, T'boli students shifted from l to r as evident in their transcripts. The replacement occurred in the final [l] in /toʊtl/ and /levl/, and in the medial [l] in /ægrɪkʌltʃər/ and /rɪzʌlt/. According to D'Angelo et al. (2021), other non-native speakers like Japanese tend to substitute the [r] sound with [l]. This is opposed to the "l/r" substitution of the participants of the study. This could be attributed to the fact that the [l] and [r] sounds resemble one another both in terms of how speakers form them and how these phonemes sound. Iverson (2003) stated that these two sounds are tough and many non-native speakers mix them up. Many students have problems hearing and feeling the difference between these two sounds. Therefore, they have problems saying the two sounds correctly. Meanwhile, in the case of the phoneme [f], the participants of the study exhibited the standard production of this sound as evident in their pronunciation of /taɪfuːn/. Their standard production of the [f] may be attributed to their mother tongue which has the consonant "f".

Articulation

Based on the analysis, utterances are dominated by substituting and omitting sounds in terms of their articulation.

Extract 8
thuh da- mehj kaas bahy ree- sehnt tahy-foons mei re- suhrt tuh
uh:h uh dee- kris in thuh kawn- trees:::::s s:sel suh- fi- s:::shens- see
fawr rahys enyeebahy uh fyu per- sent fruhm thuh ker ker- unt
tahr- get uhb thuh dih- pert- ment uhb ag- ri- kuhl- cher
sek- ri- tahr- ee wil- yuhm der s:::seyd thurs- dey

Extract 8 manifests the substitution of the [l] sound with [r] in re- suhlt, and the deletion of the [uhz] sound in da- muh- juhz and the [d] sound in kaazd.

Extract 9
in uhn in uhn in- ter- vyoo wid ey- bee-es- see- bee- en nyoos
cha- neld dhar sayd da dee- en- ey wand tuh e- li- ven
da kan- tris rahys self sur- fins:::s sur le-ver fawr rahys
tu tli- der pirs:s per- fek pers

The replacement of the [l] sound with [r] in lev- uhl is apparent in Extract 9.

Extract 10
nou if wee ahr eh- bol tuh meet dat tahr-get den wee wil
ohn- lee hab tuh im- port sev- ehn per-sent uhv ouuhr tow- tr
rahys kom- po- see- shon hee sed

The replacement of the [l] sound with [r] in tow- tl is evident in Extract 10.

Extract 11
tahy- poon kwin kwin- tuh ro- li uhn yoo-luh- seez
hab kos twelb points tri bil- yon pe- sos in
da- meds tuh da ag- ri- kor- chor sek- tor beis on
dee- eys dey- tuh as uhv thurs- dey mawr- ning

Extract 11 shows the substitution of the [r] sound with [l] in ag- ri- kuhl- cher.

Extract 12
wid thuh tahy- foon da- mehj nou that kold goh doun
uhnd bring uhs bak tuh ol- mohs ey- ti na-hyn per- sent tuh
nahyn- ti per- sent wee hab yet tuh bring in ten per- sent
uhv ouuhr tow- tar rahys kuhn- shuhmp-shuhn hee a- duhd

Extract 12 shows the omission of the [t] sound in awl- mohst.

Extract 13
neb- er- te- les:s hee uh- shoord dat da kawn- tri stil has
ih- nuhf sup- plahy uhv rahys dis:s- pahyt da
dev- ash- stey- shuhn kaas bahy da ree- suhnt
tahy- poons da ley- tis uhv wich wuhs tahy- poon
uhn- luh- sez dat bra:awt seh- vir flooding in paarts uhv loo- son

The dropping of the [t] sound is evident in Extract 13 particularly in ley- tist.

Santos (2012) opines that the most common sound misarticulations are substitutions, omissions, and distortions. Substitution is the automatic replacement of one item in a sentence, strategy, word, or phoneme when the specific information is forgotten or unknown. The participants of this study replaced the [l] sound with an [r] as evident in the words "total", "level", "result", and "agriculture" which they uttered as toht- r, lev- uhr, ri- zuhrt, and ag- ri- kuhr- cher respectively. The [l] and [r] sounds are both voiced consonants, but the [l] sound is alveolar and the latter is palatal. Moreover, the participants omit the final consonant sounds "t", "d" and "uhz" sounds. Final consonant deletion, as the process title suggests, is the process that occurs when the final consonant sound in a word is deleted. For instance, the participants articulated the words "almost", "asked" and "latest" as awl- mos, ask, and ley- tis instead of awl- most, askt, and ley- tist. The final consonant "d" is also omitted in their utterance of the words "thousand", and "caused", uttering them as thou- zuhn, and kaaz instead of thou- suhnd, and kaazd respectively. Instead of articulating the word "damages" as da- muh- juhz, they dropped the uhz sound, uttering it as da- muhj. Meanwhile, the participants did not exhibit distortion, i.e., a sound is not left out or substituted but does not sound right.

Stress

The stress in the utterance of the participants is characterized by stressing the last syllable of nouns and adjectives.

Extract 14
the DAM- a- ges caused by re- CENT ty- PHOONS
may re- SULT TO A de- CREASE in the count- TRY'S
SELF suf- fi- cien- CY for rice by a few per- CENT
from the cur- RENT TAR- get of the de- part- ment of
ag- ri- cul- TURE SEC- re- tar- y WIL- liam dar SAID thurs- DAY

Extract 14 shows that the last syllable of the words "sufficiency", "current" and "agriculture" is stressed.

Extract 15
in an in- ter- VIEW with A- B- s c- b- n news CHAN- nel
dar said the d- A wants to el- e- VATE the coun- TRY'S rice
self suf- fi- cien- CY lev- EL for rice to nine- TY THREE per- CENT

The last syllables of the words "interview" and "sufficiency" are stressed as evident in Extract 15.

Extract 16
with the ty- PHOON dam- A- GES now that could go
down and bring us back to al- MOST EIGHT- y nine
per- CENT to NINE- ty per- CENT we have yet to bring
in TEN per- CENT of our to- TAL rice consump- TION he add- ED

Stressing the last syllable of the words "almost", "total" and "consumption" is evident in Extract 16.

Extract 17
asked if this means then that there will be more rice im- por- ta- TION
for two THOU- sand TWEN- ty ONE dar said YES that is a
gi- VEN be- CAUSE we are not A- ble to pro- DUCE

yet one HUN- dred per- CENT of our re-
quire- MENT

Stressing the last syllable in the word "requirement" is apparent in Extract 17.

Extract 18
nev- er- the- LESS he AS- sured that the COUN- try
still has e- NOUGH sup- PLY of rice de- SPITE the
de- vas- TA- tion caused by the re- CENT ty- PHOONS
the LA- test of which was ty- PHOON ul- LYS- ses that
brought se- VERE flood- ING in parts of LU- zon

Stressing the last syllable of the words "recent" and "flooding" is evident in Extract 18.

The participants commonly stress the last syllable of certain words when in most two-syllable nouns and adjectives, the first syllable takes on the stress. In the case of the participants, these words were stressed in the second syllable. Furthermore, words that end with cy, ty, phy, gy , and al are stressed on the third from the end syllable (English Club, n.d.). The participants however stressed the word "sufficiency" on its last syllable. For the word that ends with the suffix "ion", the stress is going to be on the syllable right before the suffix regardless of the word length. The word "consumption" therefore is stressed on its second syllable but the participants stressed its last syllable instead. In the same vein, the rule of stress suggests that the word "agriculture" is stressed on its first syllable, the word "interview" also on its first, and the word "requirement" on its second syllable. The participants however stressed these words in their last syllable. Post da Silveira et al. (2014) noted that most word stress errors are made because of modeling a word's pronunciation on one of its more frequent cognates.

Spoken English of the Participants at the Sentential Level

There are two aspects included at the sentential level: juncture and intonation. Extracts from the participants' transcripts, considered dominant features of the T'boli spoken English, are presented in the proceeding parts.

Juncture

Based on the data, the participants commonly do not apply juncture before and after a parenthetical expression and after one thought group.

Extract 19
Typhoon damage may affect Philippines' rice sufficiency targets DA#

Extract 19 shows that the speaker did not use a juncture before the parenthetical expression –DA.

Extract 20
Asked if this means then that there will be more rice
importation for two thousand twenty-one/ Dar said Yes
that is a given because we are not able to produce
yet one hundred percent of our requirement#

Not using a juncture before and after a thought group, which is given, was evident in Extract 20.

Extract 21
He said that/ only eight days'/ worth of rice supply has
been damaged and that the country still has enough
supply of rice for eighty two days #

Extract 21 shows that the speaker did not use a juncture after one thought group "He said that only eight days' worth of rice supply has been damaged".

Extract 22
Within the year as I have said by the end of the year
we still have/eighty-two days to last meaning that will bring
us another eighty-two days from January two// thousand

twenty-one// then we will have production by
late March and April he also said #

Not using a juncture after the thought groups "Within the year" and "we still have eighty-two days to last" was evident in Extract 22.

Extract 23
Typhoons Quinta Rolly and Ulysses have caused twelve
point three billion pesos in damages to the agriculture
sector based on DA's data as of Thursday morning #

Not using a juncture after the essential parenthetical expression- "Quinta", and after one thought group- "to the agriculture sector" is evident in Extract 23.

Juncture is used to break up the whole utterance into groups and it is phonemic because it changes the meaning of a sentence (Ibrahim, 2008). Orion (2012) emphasized that pauses may vary from speaker to speaker, depending on the meaning and the situation. In this study, the participants commonly do not apply juncture before and after a parenthetical expression and after one thought group. A double bar juncture should be used before and after a parenthetical expression. In the news headline: Typhoon damage may affect Philippines' rice sufficiency targets- DA, "DA" is considered to be a nonessential parenthetical expression. In this headline, it means that "DA" happens to be the source of the information and a double juncture must be used before it. However, the participants did not regard it as a parenthetical expression as they did not apply a juncture before uttering it. They also did not use a double bar juncture before and after a parenthetical expression- that is a given. After the essential parenthetical expression "Quinta" in the statement "Typhoons Quinta, Rolly, and Ulysses have caused twelve point three billion pesos in damages to the agriculture sector based on DA's data as of Thursday morning", no juncture was used. Moreover, the participants did not pause after each of the thought groups "He said that only eight days' worth of rice supply has been damaged", "Within the year", "we still have eighty-two days to last", and "to the agriculture sector." Not using a single bar juncture after a thought group indicates that the speaker does not divide the sentence into pieces of comprehensible ideas.

Intonation

The participants tend to use a monotone at the end of the statement, rising intonation in words that are considered to be not the most important words in a sentence, and falling intonation in unfinished statements.

Extract 24
Typhoon damage may affect Philippines' rice sufficiency target- DA

Using a monotone at the end of the first statement "Typhoon damage may affect Philippines' rice sufficiency targets" is evident in Extract 24.

Extract 25
The damages caused by recent typhoons may result to a decrease in the country's self-sufficiency for rice by a few percent from the current target of the Department of Agriculture, Secretary William Dar said Thursday.

The tone in the adjectives "recent" and "current" were rising as manifested in Extract 25.

Extract 26
In an interview with ABS-CBN News Channel Dar said the DA wants to elevate the country's rice self- sufficiency level for rice to ninety-three percent.

A falling intonation was used in the unfinished statement "In an interview with ABS-CBN News Channel" as evident in Extract 26.

Extract 27
"Within the year as I have said, by the end of the year, we still have eighty-two days to last meaning that will bring us another eighty-two days from January two thousand twenty-one, then we will have

production by late March and April", he also said.

Using a falling intonation after an unfinished statement is manifested in Extract 27.

The news headline "Typhoon damage may affect Philippines' rice sufficiency targets- DA" is a two-statement headline. The first statement ends with the word "target", so a falling intonation should be used on it. However, most of the participants regarded the headline as one statement causing them to use a monotone on the last word of the first statement. The most basic rule is to use a falling tone to show the end of a sentence. A rising tone is used to show that the sentence is not finished yet (Oxford Online English, 2019). The participants, in this case, used a falling tone in unfinished statements. Orion (2012) stated that the speaker's voice may rise with the most important stressed words and falls at the end of the utterance. However, the participants' intonation was dominated by a rising tone in the adjectives "recent" and "current"; both are not considered the most important stressed words in the statement. In addition, the participants stressed these words too in their second syllable instead of the first. A combined rising tone and stress on the second syllable in these words make their utterance quite unusual and noticeable.

Conclusion

Generally, the results revealed that the T'boli students have common features in their spoken English at the word and sentential levels. Under the word level in terms of pronunciation, shifting ə to ʊ, i to ɪ, ʌ to aʊ, ə to e, ʌ to uː, ue to ʌ, ə to ɪ, ou to ʊ, ɪ to e, ʌ to ʊ, z to s, ð to d, v to b, tʃ to ts, j to w, and l to r emerged. In articulation, substituting the l sound with the r sound, and omitting the sounds t, d, uhz were manifested. In stress, stressing the second syllable in a two-syllable noun and adjective; stressing the last syllable of the words that end with the suffix "cy" and "ion", and stressing the last syllable of the words "requirement", "agriculture" and "interview" dominated. Under the sentential level in terms of juncture, no pause before and after a parenthetical expression and after a thought group was observed. In intonation, a monotone intonation was used at the end of a statement that is followed by a source of the statement. A falling intonation was utilized in unfinished statements and rising tones on the second syllable of words that are not considered the most important stressed words in a statement were highlighted.

As revealed in the findings of the study, the participants tend to replace vowel and consonant sounds in their pronunciation, they substitute and omit sound in their articulation, they shift the stress of words on their last syllable, they do not use a juncture before and after a parenthetical expression and after a thought group, they use a monotonous tone in unfinished sentences and end of a statement, and they use a rising tone in the last syllable of words that are not important in a sentence. There is a need to deeply understand the mechanism of their mother tongue to determine how it affects their spoken English. Moreover, the idiosyncrasies of their native language and other factors that affect how they learn English should be taken into account for they will certainly aid in understanding what contributes to their English oral communication skills. In essence, it can be noted that with the commonality of their spoken English, the same features can be observed among other members of the T'boli tribe within the same community. However, it does not necessarily follow that the T'boli spoken English is distinct among other Filipino tribes and other non-native English speakers of the world.

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